Financial Crunch in Railways

1067. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are readying for an acute financial crunch;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) how much percentage of its Annual Plan is being currently generated from internal resources; and

(d) whether it is declining over the years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) The financial position of Indian Railways is extremely tight. This is mainly due to the fact that in the recent years expenditure has increased steeply after implementation of recommendations of the Fifth Central Pay Commission, whereas a matching increase of receipts could not occur. In fact last year, there was a drop in freight movement, postponing that year's target to the current year. The other causes of tight financial position of Indian Railways are:—

The expenditure in the current year has further been affected by various post budgetary increases of more than Rs. 900 cr. on account of levy and hike in prices of HSD Oil, increase in rates of family planning allowance and incentive bonus to workshop staff, hike in rates of electricity tariff by some State Electricity Boards etc. Restoration of operations in Orissa after the cyclones has also put an additional burden. The pension liability is also likely to increase further by Rs. 700 cr. in the current year.

Earnings are not fully meeting the proportionate targets so far. The Railways are also put to hardship because some of the powerhouses have not cleared their dues. Badarpur Thermal Power Station owes the Railways more than Rs. 1,000 cr.

As per the Railway Safety Committee, a large backlog of replacement and renewals need to be undertaken in next five to seven years. They have recommended a grant of Rs. 15,000 cr. for this purpose.

The Railways have formulated an action plan so as to save on expenditure and also initiated action to mobilise additional resources.

(c) and (d) In Budget Estimates 1999-2000, out of the total Plan Outlay of Rs. 9,700 cr, internal resource component is Rs. 4,160 cr. i.e. 43%. The share of Internal Resources has declined from 58% during VIII Plan to 43% in the current year.

Rail Services in Eastern and South Eastern Railways

1068. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the Letters to the Editor column in Ananda Bazar Patrika dated 13th October, 1999 titled, Rail services in Eastern and South Eastern Railways; and

(b) if so, whether the grievances listed in letters from 1 to 5 have been examined by the Railway authorities and if so, the details of the measures taken in respect of each complaint?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement is attached.

Statement

1. From Shri Shiv Shankar Ghosh, Kalyangarh, Howrah on 15.09.99 the 'Bangaon Local' of 8.10 p.m. started from Sealdah Station 20 minutes after the scheduled time. After reaching Birati, it was not certain whether the train will move further somehow the train reached Howrah station at 1 a.m. The question is

(i) Why the passengers were not informed of the exact position of the appropriate time to why the brake-down engine reached was sent to Barasat so late (at about 11.30 p.m.) to move the 'Bangaon Local'.

Reply: On 15.9.99, BB-537 UP Bangaon Local was started only 5 minutes late ex-Sealdah. Due to over head equipment break-down, this train was detained at Birati station. Owing to the operational problems caused by unforeseen break-down of overhead equipment, this train was detained upto 23.52 hrs. at Birati station's Line No. 3.

Frequent announcements were made for the passengers of BB-537 UP at all stations of the section including Birati regarding overhead equipment